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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WARSAW 001200

SIPDIS

FROM THE AMBASSADOR FOR UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE TAUSCHER
GENEVA FOR ALAN CARLSON TO PASS TO U/S TAUSCHER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/07/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [RS](#) [PL](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR U/S TAUSCHER'S DECEMBER 10-11
VISIT TO WARSAW

Classified By: Ambassador Lee Feinstein. Reason: 1.4 (b, d)

11. (C) Welcome. Since your visit to Warsaw in mid-September, much has changed for the better in the bilateral relationship, although clean-up may be needed in light of Polish government statements on Patriot missiles following the December 4 meeting between the Secretary and Foreign Minister Sikorski. Overall the environment is significantly better. The President had a positive 20-minute phone call with Prime Minister Tusk on December 1; it was one of a small handful of calls the President made to Allies outside the Quad. Secretary Clinton called Foreign Minister Sikorski on November 26, and held a bilateral meeting with him on the margins of the NATO ministerial. Secretary Gates called Defense Minister Klich on December 2. General Jones conducted two DVCs with key Allies, including Poland, to consult on the new Afghanistan strategy.

12. (C) The government's decision to adopt a more positive approach is not only calculated to improve relations with the United States, it is also a domestic political strategy pitched for the Presidential election to be held in the fall of 2010. The government wants to show not simply that it has held its ground with Washington, but that relations between Washington and Warsaw have warmed as a consequence of its policies, as opposed to those of the previous Polish government.

13. (C) In addition to the intense scope of high-level contacts, Warsaw has said it wants your meetings this week to be seen as valuable to the United States. As one senior government official told me over lunch, twice for emphasis, Warsaw recognizes that past meetings were evaluated on the degree to which Poland felt adequately "pampered" by Washington. Now, he said, the government wants these meetings to be perceived in Washington as adding value for the United States, because Poland wants the meetings to continue regularly and at high levels. Moreover, the Poles understand your positive role, and want to recognize it with a SOFA signing, and a substantive exchange of views on issues of importance to both governments. In addition, the Foreign Minister has frequently praised the Administration's approach to missile defense as better for Poland's security.

14. (C) The goal in the SCCG talks is to successfully conclude the last phase of negotiations between the United States and Poland, and begin a new chapter of high-level consultations that befit a relationship between close allies. The underlying idea is to establish a normal framework for regular talks on issues of strategic importance for our countries.

Afghanistan

15. (C) Poland's decision to increase its troop contributions to ISAF by 600-1000 troops is one of the largest increases by a NATO country. Poland is framing this decision not as a gesture to the United States, but as an investment in the strength and credibility of NATO and, as a consequence, Poland's security. You should recognize Poland's signal contribution to the Alliance effort in Afghanistan, emphasizing their role as a staunch NATO ally (rather than thanking them for responding to a specific American request).

If they raise concerns about prospects for prevailing in Afghanistan, indicate the similarity in the approach of both governments to the mission. Poland's Afghan policy mirrors that of President Obama, namely the combat mission is not open ended, while economic, political and diplomatic engagement with Pakistan and Afghanistan must continue.

(Note: Deputy Foreign Minister Najder was Poland's ambassador to Afghanistan from March 2008-December 2009, and has an analysis about the similarities and differences between Iraq and Afghanistan that I can summarize for you in person.)

SOFA and BMDA Annex

16. (C) The Vice President's October 20-21 visit was a turning point, and the government has made a conscious decision to pivot toward the future, rather than focus on the past. That said, end-of-negotiation issues have popped up in the past week, as well as some dissonance after the Brussels ministerial meeting.

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-- SOFA: Foreign Minister Sikorski has said that the SOFA negotiations have been successfully concluded. As the end game on SOFA approaches, small issues remain to be nailed down, as Kurt Amund has told you. Kurt will monitor the situation closely and hopefully, working with the Embassy, will be able to resolve them before your arrival.

-- BMDA: Although U.S. proposed changes to the BMDA are cosmetic, Warsaw says it has not had the time to conduct an interagency review of the proposed changes and will not be in a position to reach agreement by December 10 on changes to the BMDA annex. That does not reflect backsliding, in my judgment; the government says it intends to seek ratification of both documents soon and together. That said, you may wish to ask about the possibility of initialing the BMDA during your visit, while emphasizing the importance of settling this soonest. At a minimum, during your visit, we should try to reach an informal understanding on what is needed in the text, and design a common plan for finalizing the agreement, perhaps by exchanging diplomatic notes. The Poles want to conclude an MD agreement soon, so they can bundle it with the SOFA for parliamentary ratification.

Some Dissonance over Patriot Batteries

17. (C) Some discord developed over statements by the Foreign Minister contending that Secretary Clinton said Patriot Missile batteries rotating to Poland would be armed at all times and fully operational. (Sikorski raised the issue after a Polish report inaccurately quoted Assistant Secretary Vershbow as saying the Patriots would be unarmed.) Sikorski has been closely and visibly linked to the Patriots; he dislikes media talk of "unarmed Patriots," and considers management of this issue to be important.

18. (C) U.S. policy, however, remains unchanged. Our policy is that the Patriot rotations are for training and exercise and that there will be opportunities to conduct such training and exercises with live ammunition over the course of the rotations. We are seeking to agree on talking points with

the Poles in advance of your meeting, but you may need to reinforce the point that the U.S. position has not changed, and that the training and exercises will provide robust training opportunities for both Polish and American soldiers.

The key point is to work together so as not to distract from the positive outcomes of the SOFA signing and the SCCG.

Meetings with Sikorski and Klich

[19](#). (C) In addition to the SOFA signing ceremony and the SCCG, you are scheduled to meet Foreign Minister Sikorski and Defense Minister Klich on December 10. We are scheduled to discuss those meetings and update you on any new developments over breakfast on December 10.

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